

THE ACTS

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Honduras
SUBJECT Highways, under Construction and Projected
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1. I have previously reported that a US firm was engaged on the construction of a modern road from Tegucigalpa to the Pan American Highway at Jicarc Galán. It always seemed strange to me that the Pan American Highway did not run through Tegucigalpa when it connects all the other Central American capitals. The extra distance would have been compensated for by the economic benefits in tapping the most productive parts of Honduras and in good will to the US. As it is the highway lies through a desolate, economically unimportant part of the country, and the people are resentful of the fact that their capital was by-passed. Formerly the only connection between Tegucigalpa and the Pan American highway was by a tortuous ox-road which snaked its way over the mountains for 130 kilometers and was impassable for motor vehicles for much of the year. More than two years ago the Honduran government awarded the above company the contract to survey a new route and to build 40 kilometers of the highway beginning at its western terminus. The government itself collected all its engineering forces and undertook to construct over 25 kilometers out of Tegucigalpa. The survey, in which advantage was taken of every easy gradient, shortened the total distance from 130 to 100 kilometers, and grading, paving and construction work on the 40 kilometers for which they contracted has now been completed. It now remains only to allow the road to settle and then to apply the asphalt surface.
2. The road has been completed on schedule and so much to the satisfaction of the Honduran government that the company has now been awarded the contract for the remaining 34½ kilometers to connect with the portion being constructed from Tegucigalpa. The road width, because of unusually wide shoulders, is equal to a three-lane highway in this country, and the grade is as easy as any over the eastern US mountains. In the entire length there are no ferries and all bridges are of concrete construction and equal to the best in the US. In the western lowlands there are swamps which were filled with will material on which to build a permanent road. Shortly after the work was completed President Galvez drove his own automobile over the road

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at a speed of 90 miles per hour and pronounced himself delighted with the achievement. A company spokesman stated, "Our relations with the government have been excellent throughout, and we have found all those with whom we have dealt business-like and honest. I have not heard of any Communist propaganda or attempted infiltration among our laborers."

3. Being a country without railroads and which only two decades ago emerged from the ox-cart into the airplane age, Honduras has an urgent need of all-weather roads. As rapidly as is possible with its limited resources, the government is attempting to meet this need, and has projected several new highways to connect economically strategic areas. A road has been planned to run from La Esperanza to the Lempa river on the border of El Salvador and thus give the farmers of this rich valley an outlet via the latter country for their products, which until now they have lacked sadly. First, on the agenda, however, is the highway projected from Tegucigalpa to Puerto Cortés on the Caribbean by way of Lago de Yojoa. When this is completed, there will be direct connection between the East and West coasts.

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